They were like other districts and divisions in the Corps, except they had a very large military customer and a very spread command. So, I thought they did a super job, and I thought they were most professional.

Q: Other DCSENGR issues that we need to talk about?

A: That kind of takes me out of the DCSENGR category, I think.

Chief of Staff, USAREUR

Q: In June, I think it was of 1988, you went from the position of DCSENGR to Chief of Staff, USAREUR. This is about the time of the change of commanders, right? About the same time.

A: It was exactly the time—

Q: Exactly?

A: —because General Otis and General Fiala retired at the same ceremony on the parade field there, and General Saint took command and I became Chief of Staff.

Q: General Ray came up?

A: General Ray came up to be the DCSENGR at that time. That's right.

Q: Well, new job, new commander. Was that a pretty tough transition, or was it, by virtue of your experience there, not so bad?

A: It was not too tough a transition for me because I'd been there a year and watched General Fiala and General Otis be involved in numerous issues facing the command—the Apache helicopters in Wiesbaden, the noise at Wildflecken, and the Vander Shaaf committee had just come through that we'll talk about in a minute. And, oh, a number of the major issues involved in the REFORGER exercises, all of those kinds of things. So, I really had a feeling for what was going on.

I also knew General Saint from the past. We had been in the same company at West Point, and we came to Europe in 1976 for our colonel commands, his the 11th Armored Cav Regiment and mine the 7th Engineer Brigade. Immediately before that we had gone to Monterey together for language school, and we'd been together there three weeks. We'd known each other here and there, and I'd seen him at Fort Hood when he commanded III Corps. A lot of our year at Headquarters, USAREUR, '78–'79, after the commands, we were there together.

So, I knew him well, and we had quite a personal interaction. I also knew most of the folks around the headquarters, so it really wasn't a major transition.

Now, the style changes from Otis to Saint were rather major to the command, as they adjusted to a new Commander in Chief. General Otis was a very "on top of things" person, but his method was really letting people do things—but he was always there at the sound of guns.

General Saint had a few things that he wanted to be sure happened, so he started putting out a few directives and changed the style around. Both of them worked through their Chief of Staff, and so I guess it was a fast, fast start out the gate for the horse, and so I had to grab the tail and pull the whole staff and coordinate a whole bunch of activities, so the intensity of the pace picked up. Transitionwise, as far as knowledge and everything else, it was not such a major change.

Q: Well, the Chief of Staff's position is—correct me if I'm wrong here—is a position that the commander has a large hand in filling. Isn't that the case?

A: I think so.

Q: You very much were handpicked by General Saint, in this case, for the job? It's a key job.

A: I would guess so. He always had a saying that he would let his subordinate Corps and division commanders pick three people: their chief of staff, their G–3, and their command sergeant major. After that, the folks were his to allocate to cross level and fill other positions.

Q: So, you would expect he would think that in terms of his Chief of Staff. Did you know several months in advance of the change, or was it pretty quick?

A: No, I think I probably only knew about 60 days in advance. The May time frame is my recollection.

Q: Give me a brief description of the USAREUR Chief of Staff's responsibilities. That could go on for a long time, but sort of characterize the job.

A: General Saint believed the Chief of Staff is supposed to run things. He provides the direction, the thrust, calls the shots, the policies, and that sort of thing, with the day-by-day activities of the command at the headquarters run by the Chief of Staff. That means coordinating all the many activities so things, as he would say, hum along, keep moving, and then prepare for new things and make recommendations—making sure everything happens.

He had a deputy commander that he put on to certain responsibilities, but he really expected that I would run the staff and thereby the command. His morning meetings were with me, the command sergeant major, and the deputy commander. Whereas General Otis used to have the DCSOPS, Major General George Joulwan, come in as part of those meetings, General Saint said, "No, the DCSOPS runs his staff. You're the Chief of Staff; he works for you. I'll tell you what I want the DCSOPS to be pushing, and you go make sure it happens."

So, with the Secretary of the General Staff, I ran all the papers in and out of the headquarters and tried to make sure things were coordinated. The functional chiefs—logistics, engineering, intelligence and operations—ran their functions, and the Chief of Staff made sure they were coordinated, integrated, and followed the thrusts of the Commander in Chief. When problems arose, they were brought to him for resolution. When he had things he wanted to initiate, we would get the right people in to get it started, and I would track with them that things were going along in accordance with the desires of the commander.

Q: Well, as you've mentioned before, one of the things that you had to tackle right away were the implications, or consequences, of the Vander Shaaf study.

A: Yes. I should drop back and say Vander Shaaf came over as part of a study effort, having decided that we ought to take some folks out of Europe. It wasn't just Europe; it was all around—avoid duplication. I forget the acronym for the study he was on.

He came into USAREUR headquarters like a blustery north wind—more like a hurricane, I guess. Chuck Fiala, the Chief of Staff, said he knew Vander Shaaf. He knew he was going to come in, and we ought to be prepared because it wasn't going to be pleasant.

In fact, we did great preparation for him. We were there to brief what USAREUR headquarters did with other headquarters, EUCOM, et cetera. I know I was on my feet for two hours briefing in my particular area, and all the other deputy chiefs were too. It was really thorough.

His approach was so shallow that he never, ever, I think, tuned in to listen. He was there to speak. His notions were preconceived. We were there to brief an organization chart. He disregarded that. He went with the phone chart that slips under the glass on your desk. That's what he thought was the bible.

So, he would ask, for instance, "Why do you have a topo officer in DCSENGR whose responsibilities are to coordinate the topographic activities of all the Army in Europe, when European Command has the same thing?" I'd say, "Well, the European Command has to interrelate Air Force, Army, Navy, and the rest of it."

"Well, what does yours do?" I said, "Well, we have the active units here. We have the 649th Topo Battalion, and this officer's the interconnect between them and the States and makes all the topo kinds of things happen."

"Well, it says here you've got two people." I asked, "What do you mean, two people? I've only got one person." He'd say, "Well, look. The phone book has these two phone numbers here."

I'd say, "Well, disregard that. That doesn't mean anything. I mean, yes, we make up a phone list. This guy, that's a position that comes in from the 649th. We give him a phone and a desk, but, I mean, it's not a position on our staff. It's really a liaison position, a desk and a phone."

To Vander Shaaf it was a superfluous position because, obviously, it was in the phone book. I just gave one example. I mean, the whole thing was like that. His desk phone charts were what guided him, and he'd make up his mind based on them. We really spent an awful lot of time with some very good rationale for various things.

He'd ask, "Well, why does EUCOM have one?" I'd say, "Well, you've got to ask EUCOM that. I mean, I know what mine does, and the Army assets, but what the EUCOM guy does in coordinating the three, what do they need that for? Go ask them."

He asked what functions the DEHs did at the Corps headquarters versus USAREUR, and so we told him. We explained how General Otis had taken all of the assistance teams out of USAREUR. They now did that function at Corps. General Otis had already pulled out the duplication between the two headquarters.

I think it went right over the top of him, or he didn't want to hear it, or he had his numbers in his pockets and he had to come up with something. Everything that Chuck Fiala predicted would happen, happened. Vander Shaaf went home and wrote his report anyway, and the report said—I don't remember the number exactly—"take 420 spaces out of USAREUR headquarters."

Q: Out of the headquarters?

A: He called it duplication. Or out of command headquarters elements, was the way it was put. Not necessarily USAREUR headquarters, but the command headquarters offices. When it came over for USAREUR comment, we commented. It was a cheap shot—he never found a basis for his actions. I mean, we couldn't put his numbers together. There was no supporting rationale that would explain why or where the "duplication" was found to exist.

Even though we were backed up by EUCOM and by the Department of the Army on our position—I guess having advertised that he had come up with some cuts, Defense was bound that some cuts were going to be taken. Because they were overseas and that was where they wanted to make a point with Congress, the cuts were taken. So, we had to cut those people out of the headquarters offices. To do that, it fell now to General Saint and his Chief of Staff, me.

At the same time, General Saint had his own thoughts about duplication and the fact that certain layers ought to come out, specifically in nonappropriated fund activities. You need to remember that he had previously been the commander of the 1st Armored Division and the community commander of that region, reporting to VII Corps. So, he had the natural inclination of a division commander that the Corps was all screwed up and didn't quite have it right, and why were they between him and the great resourcer, USAREUR? He had a concept, that later has been implemented, for converting and getting rid of certain layers of things so commanders had regions that they were responsible for, and then they could go straight to the resourcer and get things, and they didn't need extra policy guidance from a Corps level headquarters, and maybe the Corps ought to be by themselves.

Now, I say that because that view carried on some activities over the year and led to many more after I departed, but that became a factor as we tried to address the Vander Shaaf cuts. We really went out with his guidance to the Corps commanders. When I say "Corps commanders," I mean the 21st Support Command along with V and VII Corps, the three three-star commanders, and also to the Berlin commander and the Southern European Task Force commander in Italy.

Those five, plus the Commander in Chief, Deputy Commander, Chief of Staff, and the USAREUR Command Sergeant Major, met rather often together, and so we all had a sense of direction on where we were going, and we would address various kinds of major items going on.

We had the Corps and the other two commands submit potential cuts, focusing cuts to try to get rid of duplications, with quite a number to be in the nonappropriated fund management arena.

Based on that, we convened commandwide meetings. I chaired the first meeting, and we tried to identify certain areas for reduction. He established numbers for the Corps headquarters, and then they got to choose where the cuts came, but then he wanted to see some rationale for why things were different in similar Corps functional offices.

We held a great, big, all-afternoon meeting with the Corps chiefs of staff, with me presiding, and we tried to lay the groundwork for what would be presented to General Saint and the Corps commanders for final decision. Then we had another meeting where General Saint presided with the Corps commanders present, and the briefings laid out which cuts had been easy and were agreed upon and those that were still disagreements, and then the Corps commanders had a chance to say, "No, I don't want to do that. I think we ought to do this instead," and that sort of thing. Then General Saint would make the final decision.

It was a difficult process. There were two sessions, one presided over by me, one presided over by General Saint, to make the final decisions. With that we cut out the 420 spaces and sent them back.

Q: Did those come pretty heavily at the Corps level?

A: Yes.

Q: USAREUR is undergoing yet another round of staff reorganization and cuts, it seems to me.

A: Yes, and I think the idea was that General Otis had trimmed the USAREUR staff, and he had started to look at the Corps staffs and turned that task over to General Saint. That's where the ax fell this particular time.

With General Saint's predilection that Corps commanders may have intervened too often in his divisional community arena and they had certain other responsibilities they needed to put their attention to, that's why that happened.

Q: Well, an issue like this probably took up a good proportion of your time as Chief of Staff.

A: Well, at that particular time this was a big issue. There were all kinds of different issues always coming along. It was a very intense period of my career, I guess the most intense. I was staying late at night, taking briefcases home at night and four briefcases on a weekend.

There were a lot of activities and interaction with the host nations.

Q: Why don't we turn to some of those host nation issues?

A: I think I really talked about them earlier. The Apache helicopters at Wiesbaden issue continued. The noise issues continued. They were the prime items.

I would say that in March of '89 things took another change. There had been a study two years before, actually before I arrived as DCSENGR, involving the ministries I've spoken of, Defense and Finance. It also involved the USAREUR Chief of Staff and Major General Scott Smith and other staffers from USAREUR, involving the use of our training areas and how the various nations train.

The basic thing the Germans were asking was, "Why doesn't the American Army train like the German Army?" We felt there were major differences and that we could not tolerate the reduced level of training of the German Army, both the manner of training and the level of proficiency. Also, our Army was deployed overseas and, having brought people over there, we wanted to keep them occupied.

The German Army needed to knock off on a Friday afternoon so their soldiers could go home because they had a home to go to. When our folks knocked off, they didn't have a home to go home to, and so they could go down into the town. Yet, downtown were some of the Germans who didn't want the Americans around. So, what kind of activities could one keep our soldiers involved in over these off periods?

We really wanted a high level of training intensity. We needed to train the combined arms team together, and that was our emphasis and not the German emphasis. We wanted to train live fire, and we wanted to do a lot of those kinds of things.

So, we made the case, and it had been a dormant issue for over a year. But, in that March of '89, we went up to a meeting where we were asked to come up and explain our need for live firing at Grafenwöhr.

Dr. Fischer, whom I mentioned before, really threw down the gauntlet. He basically said, "You must begin training like the Bundeswehr. Nothing else will be satisfactory. If you don't tell us in a week that you're willing to do that, then we will get your political masters to tell you to do that."

This was a very different tone and sense of interaction than I'd ever experienced. I'd been doing this for nearly two years with the Germans, and although we had some issues, I thought they were supportive and they were trying to accommodate us.

It changed at that meeting. It must have changed that they lost their willingness to stand up and say to their citizens, "Yes, it is right. They're here as our partners and we're doing a common thing, and for that, they need to do certain things, and we need to try to accommodate that."

I'd seen that changing over—they weren't now always quite so eager to be out front explaining why it was right for Americans to do this for the common cause. Now, here in March, we were being told, "You do it our way or we're going to get your masters to make you change."

I don't know what prompted that. Eberhard Stoltenberg was, at that time, the finance minister, and he told Fischer to go and tell us this. I guess they felt from the political climate that they could obtain that kind of fix on us.

So, I really felt a change in atmosphere at that point in time. Of course, I left soon thereafter and started looking on from afar. Things became more difficult in terms of getting things done. They wanted us to knock off all firing at night with our artillery at Grafenwöhr. We wanted to fire at night because our purpose is to train in peace like we're going to fight in war. You fire at night in war. So, we wanted opportunities to fire at night.

The United States made a rather formidable investment in Europe with these forces in the number of units and artillery battalions. If you just ran the math of trying to rotate our artillery battalions through the training area, they wouldn't make it adhering to Bundeswehr timetables. You couldn't get them around through there in a year's time.

So, we told them we were developing concrete warheads and things to reduce the noise and that sort of thing. Basically, they just didn't want to hear it. They just wanted us to change.

That was a very, very controversial and bitter meeting—a watershed meeting, I thought.

Q: So, did this lead, then, to a whole series of exchanges back and forth, or did they pull in the political authorities?

A: Well, we told all of our own political authorities beforehand, "Stand fast. Don't let them do this." During the time I was there—this is March, and I left the beginning of August—there wasn't much time left for me in this. We had a new ambassador. Vernon "Dick" Walters came in and took over. There were several meetings with him, and they were quite open. We didn't feel any, any of the political pressure from our side during the time I was there.

Q: So, possibly another example of the hardening attitude on the Germans' part—given the events that are beginning to go on all over Eastern Europe and Germany as well—was the dramatic change in atmosphere over the last two or three years.

A: I think that was a watershed meeting and marked a change in attitude.

Q: Well, you were there—talking about a watershed—for the end of the Pershing IIs as well. Would you talk about that, and the INF [intermediate nuclear forces] treaty?

A: Well, we should all be proud of the Pershings, and we should be proud of the conviction of the Reagan administration that put them over there in the face of a lot of actions on the part of the German populace and others to not deploy them. Even the German government stood up and supported the deployment.

The Pershing II, I believe, was a major factor in causing change. Our ability to project farther into the hinterlands and threaten things the Soviet Union didn't think would be threatened was a motivator to them. I believe, also, it was a major factor in their seeing that they could not compete with us both in the arms race and economically. They were really bankrupting their nation economically in pushing the arms race. They weren't going to be able to beat us. That started the chain of events in leadership thinking, Gorbachev's thinking, that led to other things and the major changes that happened later.

The Pershing folks and the commanders there in the 56th Artillery Brigade did a super job in planning for and executing that rather difficult maneuver—taking things down, moving them out, moving people out, keeping morale up even while things are being taken apart. I think they all really deserve real plaudits for the work they did.

Q: Yes, that's a dramatic event for lots of different reasons. What about NATO issues while you were there? Major alliance issues that you were having to deal with, apart from the problems with the Germans?

A: I don't recall any. We had numerous major exercises with CENTAG and the rest. Our interactions with the other forces and with the other commanders, both NORTHAG and others, were strong. There was good interaction between General Saint and General Galvin.

So, I don't believe that there were major issues that came during my rather short time frame. In the great scope of things, one year is not very long.

Q: Right.

A: In those kinds of terms.

Q: Did you have quite a bit of contact with your NATO—counterparts is not the right word—officers in CENTAG, NORTHAG, German, British?

A: Not a whole lot really. Not me in particular. We did with CENTAG in that the CENTAG headquarters was collocated in the same building. The CENTAG Chief of Staff, a German major general, had his office immediately below mine. He would coordinate his staff from there, and I would coordinate the USAREUR staff, and we socialized together and did some things together.

When we went off in NATO field training exercises, General Saint would go off with CENTAG, and the Deputy Commander in Chief, General George R. Stotser, would come with us. We'd go out separately.

With NORTHAG—when I was DCSENGR, I have not mentioned that—we used to have home and home meetings with the BAOR [British Army of the Rhine] engineer where our staffs would get together.

As Chief of Staff, I went up at least once and hosted once the BAOR Chief of Staff to coordinate and have meetings on various kinds of issues and to keep each other up to date on things. We did not have a lot of that kind of activity. I think General Saint had much more interaction in the ways he traveled.

Now, one thing while I was Chief of Staff, we had a number of interchanges with the French Forces in Germany, located in Baden–Baden, and also with the French First Army, in Strasbourg. I took a delegation from USAREUR—our deputy chiefs: DCSOPS, DCSLOG, and so forth—down, and we met with the French First Army general staff in some briefings at their headquarters. That was very interesting. They very much wanted to establish a professional working relationship, even though they weren't participating in the military part of NATO. The probabilities were that, in case of conflict, a Warsaw Pact attack, that they would then join with us. So, we had that kind of interaction and common interest. They also participated in some of our exercises. Not every one, but on their choice.

The Chief of Staff of the French First Army was Brigadier General Quesnot, an engineer that had commanded the parachute regiment in Montauban that I had visited as commandant of the Engineer School at Belvoir when I went over to visit their engineer school in Angers. We had flown down to Montauban and visited them, so we had a little reunion in Strasbourg.

There was a liaison officer from the headquarters of the French Forces in Germany, at USAREUR in Heidelberg.

General Quesnot mentioned the fact that this was a great combination because it was the French First Army and the U.S. Seventh Army that had fought up through the southern part of France and southern Germany during the war.

Q: Yes.

A: Then we had the previous common personal bond.

Q: Yes. That's interesting. Did you have a sense, and this is still fairly early, by the summer of '89, a sense that there were such dramatic changes coming in Europe, or going on? Or was this too early?

A: No, we could not sense how far and how fast it was going to go. Gorbachev was there. He was just starting to make changes. He was talking *glasnost* and *perestroika* at that time.

We need to swing to that arena, the interactions we had with the Group of Soviet Forces, Germany.

I need to go back and say one other thing because this ties both to the Soviets and the Germans. When we had the French visits and talked with the commander of the French

Forces in Germany, having coffee with him before we went on to talk to the First Army folks, he said, "You know, it's really important that we French and you Americans are seen together like this, not only from the standpoint of the Russians, but also from the standpoint of the Germans." I thought that was an astute statement of the way things had worked out over time. That's about the time frame that we got the ultimatum from the Germans: start training like the others.

With the status of forces agreements, the Germans were meeting with the French and the Brits and us, wanting to do it separately. We were all saying, "No, we've got to be in this together because sending forces have common kinds of issues."

Well, then you swung to the Soviets and asked about our ability to predict. Other things were happening at this time. The thaw in relationships was happening.

The President had met with Gorbachev. The Secretary of Defense had met with the Soviet Defense Minister. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs had met with his counterpart. The next in that increment of exchanges was to be CINCUSAREUR.

Q: Yes.

A: So, the door was opened by the administration, the State Department, that we ought to be facilitating and having this exchange. I need to backtrack a little bit, just to identify that the Chief of Staff was the point of contact in USAREUR for the Soviet military mission in Frankfurt. Also then was the point of contact for our own military missions in Potsdam and Berlin.

Now, our military mission would have a point of contact with the Chief of Staff, Group of Soviet Forces, Germany, as well.

I had a lot of interaction with the Soviet military mission at Frankfurt. I visited them there and had them down to the headquarters in USAREUR. Likewise, Brigadier General Greg Govan—he was a colonel then—was our chief of mission in Potsdam, and he did the same with them.

Out of all this came an invitation from General Snetkov to the CINCUSAREUR to come up and visit them at their headquarters. I flew up to Berlin, drove over to Potsdam to our military mission headquarters, and met with their Chief of Staff, Major General V. Fursin, to make the arrangements for this get-together.

That was a rather interesting meeting. At that meeting we made the arrangements for a USAREUR visit to their headquarters. We decided on a delegation of six principals, and they would match with six principals.

General Saint, of course, led our delegation. I went along. The DCSOPS went, along with two division commanders and the command sergeant major.

We flew up to Berlin and drove to Potsdam. They met us at the U.S. mission with a bus. We drove for about an hour to their headquarters at Wunsdorf.

There were numerous activities involving first an honor ceremony, then an introductions get-together with breakfast kind of goodies out and coffee. One of the significant things about the Russians in East Germany was that they didn't live like we did. They were all by themselves in East Germany. They allowed no Germans into their kasernes, whereas our workforce in support of the U.S. Army, Europe, was largely German. With them, there were no Germans, and that meant quite an isolation of their army from the German population. They maintained it that way, for whatever their purposes.

I guess there were eight waitresses that were there to take care of the tables, et cetera. We had a rather stiff opening, and then we started going around touring. They took us by a typical barracks, which was immaculate. Shined floor and not a thing out of place and not a coat in sight. Occupied? Didn't appear so.

Then we went to what they called their rec center tearoom. There were the same eight Soviet waitresses waiting to pass out something to eat.

So, then we went out to the field and observed field training activities at a large range complex. They had set up a huge tent for field mess, and we were to get a typical Russian soldier's meal. After walking in and being able to wash our hands, we went in to sit down at the tables, and surprise, there were those same eight Soviet waitresses—out in the field.

I'd have to say the meal was very good. I don't know if that was the typical meal, but the soup might have been typical soup, and it was very good. Then we went back out to the ranges and observed an exercise that afternoon. It was a live-fire exercise in which the Warsaw Pact forces took on an attack by NATO forces. We watched that live-fire exercise and then watched some other training.

Then we went back to the headquarters and freshened up for an evening in which we were going to have a meal and then watch a Soviet soldier show. This was a very professional series of acts. They had the families of the local garrison there and the wives of our hosts. That was our only activity with somebody besides our meeting group. At the meal, again, there were those same eight Soviet waitresses. Anyway, it was an interesting time.

On the bus back that evening, we were talking with the person who had picked us up and was escorting us back, the Deputy Commander in Chief. Someone on the bus asked him, "Well, do you think Gorbachev will succeed?"

His answer was very interesting because—now mind you, your question was, "Were we able to predict anything?" My answer was, "No." His answer was, "Well, he must succeed, you see, because we have too many millionaires in our government and in our society and we're not supposed to have any millionaires."

Q: Interesting.

A: So, that was the end of that visit.

Q: You said it was sort of stiff that morning. Did things loosen up as the day went on?

A: It loosened up a bit. General Snetkov was a very gregarious, outgoing person. I mean, he dominated the conversation. None of his people really said much except off to the side.

Q: Yes.

A: General Snetkov almost had a dialogue with General Saint while the rest of us sat there at the table because he was so dominant and the others yielded to him so much. Although General Saint would yield to us, he hardly had a chance to because he was sitting directly opposite General Snetkov and it was all directed over towards him.

There was one other interesting statement while we were standing around talking to one of their commanders who commanded a division that was being demobilized and sent back to the Soviet Union. One of our division commanders, I think maybe Cal Waller, said, "What's your biggest problem?"

The Russian said, "Well, my biggest problem is how to take care of my people and find them housing back in the Soviet Union. You see, they have been in the military all their lives, and they don't have houses. They're not from a city, and they don't want to go back to the farm."

Q: Right.

A: "There's no housing in the places they would like to go, Moscow or Leningrad and so forth. So, my problem is how to take care of the people and find them housing, those that are being mustered out."

Of course, we saw later on that this was a very big problem and continues now as they're trying to get out of the Baltic states.

Q: Yes.

A: Germany actually has negotiated with them for the extrication of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, and ended up paying for houses to be built in the Soviet Union to facilitate the process to get them back.

Q: Yes. Your description of the installation of the Soviet bases helps explain why Soviet troops could stay so long, and I guess some are still there in eastern Germany, that they are insulated from the rest of the society.

A: Very insulated. That's right.

Q: So, that is their home until they can get some place back in Russia.

A: Well, it could be, but, you see, their short period of service for the inductees means that they have a swap out annually.

Later on in the spring, we hosted General Snetkov and his delegation at Heidelberg for a return visit. In this case, it was an overnight affair, and they came down, spent a night with their mission in Frankfurt, and then came on to Heidelberg the next day.

Our focus for their visit was to prompt them to see lots of people, not to be insulated, and to see our Army as it was. We let a lot of the visit be handled by our noncommissioned officers. The Soviet Army did not have a noncommissioned officer Corps of substance that could do the kinds of things like the rock-hard sergeant noncommissioned officer that is the backbone of the American Army, that's always down there at the cutting edge, making things happen. It doesn't exist in the Soviet Army.

Commander-in-Chief to Commander-in-Chief meeting in Heidelberg, West Germany, in 1989. From left to right, Major General Foley, Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations; Lieutenant General Stotser, Deputy CINC; an interpreter; General Saint, CINC USAREUR; Major General Kem, Deputy Chief of Staff, Engineer; and Major General Joulwan, Commanding General, 3d Armored Division.

At every opportunity we allowed them to see how capable our noncommissioned officers were, so they'd see the strength of the American Army. You don't just look at an officer or look at a rifleman, but you recognize that noncommissioned officer strength and how substantive it is.

After we had an introductory meeting over the green felt table—somebody said you always had to have a green felt table—and had had a chance to dialogue a little bit, then General Snetkov and General Saint had a commander-to-commander private meeting with interpreters for about an hour.

Then we hopped aboard helicopters and flew down to the 3d Mech Division at Schweinfurt to observe them doing daily activities. There we were met by the command sergeant major of

the division and their noncommissioned officers who took them on tours of the barracks and briefed them. The noncommissioned officers did everything and the officers stood back.

We had the same delegation matchups we did before, and so we went along and watched. Then they went into the unit dining facility for lunch. Where at Wunsdorf we had always eaten with them in our tight group, we had our soldiers at the mess with them. There was a sergeant in charge of each table.

Since their Chief of Staff, Major General Fursin, was there, and I was his counterpart, the two of us went to the same table, but there was also a captain, a sergeant, a corporal, and so forth. Our whole principle was to let the troops talk to them and get an interaction.

Our core delegation was there to try to facilitate a dialogue between our soldiers and them. Our folks did very well. Our soldiers asked the questions, "Well, what do you do about this in your Army?" That sort of thing. It worked very well.

General Kem (right), Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Europe, and Major General Fursin, Chief of Staff of the Group of Soviet Forces Germany, at a 1989 celebration of the meeting of American and Soviet forces on the Elbe River in 1945.

Then we went out on the range and saw our people operate on a weapons range right on the kaserne. Schweinfurt has one of our better facilities for training. Then we moved to the local training area and watched a combined arms exercise using MILES [multiple integrated laser engagement simulation system], the laser designator that we fit our weapons with so they can record training "kills." The scenario had a Warsaw Pact tank–infantry company attacking and being taken under fire by a U.S. tank–infantry platoon in hull-down positions dug into the hillside and with a minefield in front.

Afterwards, we brought all the tanks and vehicles up and let General Snetkov and his folks walk down and talk to our crews. The rationale was there, again, to see the strength of our people. I mean, the well-trained, rock-hard element of our capabilities.

I took their chief up to one tank crew and let him do the talking—we had an interpreter there. He asked the tank commander, "How long have you been in the Army?" "Well, Sir, fourteen years." "How long have you been over here in this outfit?" "Well, four years, Sir."

Then he asked, not understanding, "Well, what tank do you use when you go to the training areas?" The sergeant was a little perplexed with this. See, the Soviets have one tank at home and a different tank in the training area. The sergeant says, "No, I take my tank. This tank."

It had a strap of MILES devices on the turret. You could see that was there. So, we explained. "No, that's the tank he maintains with his crew in the motor pool; that's the one he brings out here to the local training area; it is the one we put on a train and take to Grafenwöhr for live fire. So, he and his crew know how to shoot their tank; they know how to maneuver the tank. It's theirs."

Now, the tank commander was an Hispanic–American, and the Soviet Chief of Staff moved over to the next man, and there was a black gunner. He asked how long he'd been there. "Five years," was the answer. He moved on down to the next soldier and talked with him, and he'd been a year and a half on the crew. The loader had been there about seven months. So, we had a rather cohesive crew there, recognizing their swap outs.

Q: It must have been interesting to observe them and see what they were interested in.

Major General Kem (left) escorted Major General Fursin, Chief of Staff of the Group of Soviet Forces Germany, on a visit to Grafenwöhr in 1989 during the CINC to CINC visit.

A: Oh, it was. That evening, whereas at Wunsdorf we only ate dinner with our officer hosts, we invited them to eat dinner with us and our wives.

The USAREUR chorus sang—not the professional actors that they had, but a very good bunch of soldiers. We explained to them they were soldiers in wartime, not professional entertainers.

The next day we flew down to Grafenwöhr and took them out to see artillery outfits set up to shoot and then took them out on our range and watched our tanks go down range, live fire. One of our tanks skipped a round up into the target, and the Chief of Staff picked up on that. "Ah, it just skipped." Then we said, "Yeah," and took him up into the control tower, and he found out that the person had not been credited for the hit on the scoring system. So, we had a good interaction with that.

Then they left from Grafenwöhr and drove back on up across the border at Hof.

So, that was our exchange of activities—very cordial and very professional with an understanding of each other.

Q: Itself something different, that probably had not happened often, if at all, had it? That sort of real, open exchange between Soviet and our forces?

A: No, not to that degree. I believe back in General Blanchard's day, he told me there had been a meeting, I believe, between him and his senior counterpart. We had much acrimony in the interim. For instance, just before I got there, the killing of Major [Arthur D., Jr.] Nicholson of our military mission had been rather brutal, and there were a lot of hard feelings that went with that.

We had other meetings between me and their Chief of Staff, Major General Fursin, to try to ensure that the rules of engagement, or disengagement, working with each other's mission people—ours over there, theirs here—did not lead to things that were threatening harm to those people.

Q: So, you worked with their Chief of Staff on that issue?

A: Yes. Those were formal. We met in Potsdam, and we'd have interactions through the missions in the interim.

Q: Well, along these same lines, I think you mentioned earlier this afternoon that USAREUR was giving some thought to restationing, to looking towards the future, some changes in stationing.

A: Yes. It seemed to General Saint that the writing was on the wall, that the clamor now in Congress—we'd had Senator [Sam] Nunn come over and talk with us, and several congressmen, and Senator Hollings had been over—that we'd best start the planning for contingent drawdowns. Yet, it needed to be a very close-hold kind of thing because we were really only talking contingency.

The problems were we'd get asked questions, even though decisions hadn't been made, and then if people know things are being thought, then that can become a self-propagating proposition. So, he, I think smartly, established a team to think out in matrix form what might happen—basically look at it from the standpoint of segments. We didn't know the final level, but it was going to be something more than just the 56th Artillery Brigade, Pershing. What if we had to start pulling things out by increments? What increments should those be? Where would we want to take them physically? If you're going to do that, you really ought to have a base case, an objective that you're going to end up with.

If you don't know where that line is, how can you have a really good objective? You'd better establish something. So, he picked a level of a single Corps, a couple of divisions, and associated support elements that might be a reduced-sized USAREUR.

Then we went through the thinking process of what that force might be, and then we went over to the stationers and the operators to say, "Well, look. That's where it's going to be. Where should they end up? What are the best places, in terms of location, U.S. facilities, housing, getting our people off of the economy as much as possible? We ought to move out enough and save the housing so our people can have it like we should have. We should give up the worst places and the places where we always had to accommodate a shortfall and where it wasn't working. Let those go and save the ones where we could be best positioned. We could tighten the force, but locally loosen up to accommodate all the needs, keep the quality of life and the ability to train in whatever force it was."

The effort came about to identify some segmented force slices—knowing what the objective force was assumed to be—and identify the objective facilities.

So, if somebody would come in and say, "This is the number," then we could go to the stack and say, "Okay. That means these segments go, these units go, these are the places that go, and these are the kind of moves we have to make to make all that happen." Then we could cost it out and identify all the other actions required to do it.

So, that thinking started at that particular time, and it was continually honed until such time as it was needed to be implemented.

Q: Well, that was, as things turned out, very good advanced planning.

A: I believe so.

Q: It may help to explain why some things have seemed to have gone smoothly, I guess, because they haven't hit the news. Maybe that's a bad definition of going smoothly, but you know, things started changing with USAREUR pretty quietly. You'd hear about the huge numbers of people coming back on the transatlantic flights, but you didn't hear about negative stories, you know.

A: Well, General Saint took a retired colonel who had spent a lot of time in DCSOPS and really intimately knew what went on in the command, and brought him back as a civilian, and put him in charge of the team. We allowed him to lock himself in the room and do the quiet

work—high-stress, high-intensity kind of work—because once somebody needed to know something, it had to come very fast.

General Saint was very smart, starting that process and setting it out in that manner, so the homework could be done early because always the questions came and they never included sufficient assumptions to provide a valid point to start. The people wanted the answer anyway, and you always knew you were going to be responsible for your answer, even though the context may not quite be right in the way the question was put.

Q: Right.

A: So, he set this up, and he set Darryl aside to work the problem. He was the expert, and he had straight line access to General Saint so that it could be kept rather close-hold so the whole world didn't know because that would have had implications to various communities and impacted the morale of our folks. Yet, the planning was done and packaged to be used.

Q: Can you say about what time that started? Not an exact day, of course, but spring of '89, summer? Spring of '89?

A: Spring of '89.

Q: Okay. Other issues you'd noted for your period as Chief of Staff?

A: I think we've hit most of them as we've talked through. I think another fine action that took place early on was also rather a good example of how General Saint worked, and that was the company level computer. It had long been an Army issue as to whether the company should have a computer or not. The opposing view was that with a computer the company administration would be tied to the orderly room, with the first sergeant supervising a clerk on the computer when the first sergeant was supposed to be out with the company training and not tied to administration. During General Wickham's time as Chief of Staff of the Army, it had been an issue that was debated at the highest levels, and he had said, "No company computer."

Well, General Saint was one who believed that the way the computer had evolved to the lap top, that there was benefit to have a company computer in order to help the first sergeant. He could take his clerk to the rifle range and they could enter the people's scores right there rather than having people doing pencil log work, keeping records, and then bringing that back to have it laboriously entered on a roster. He thought there was a value in having a computer to take out to training or whenever.

He also thought that to obtain the potential value of a company level computer, it shouldn't be something that was going to be dictated by computer experts in Washington or personnelists. We already had all kinds of automation with the personnel system and what was going to happen at battalion level, and the personnel team wasn't working—it was placing additional demands on the company.

So, as long as the battalion was putting demands on the company, giving them information, somebody had to stay in the orderly room and answer those demands. If we could make that work through a company computer, then that would be better.

General Saint, providing direction to this, told me to find a company commander coming out of command who knew something about this kind of business. He wanted company commanders to develop a tool that helped them, and he didn't want other people to meddle with that process, telling the company commander what he had to have. He really forbade people from screwing with the people developing this product.

We found a company commander coming out of command, and he became the guy who was told, "You go out and invent those software programs to do the jobs you need as a company commander to make your job easier and to get the first sergeant out of the orderly room, not keep him there."

General Saint didn't say, "You've got to have this, you've got to have that." He just said, "Let the company commander do it, and don't anybody mess with him."

The next thing he did was to give, out of the USAREUR budget, each Corps a bunch of money to buy the personal computers for the next budget year, so the seed money was there. It wasn't enough to do the whole command, but it was to be seed money. The Corps were to identify those units who should be the seeds of the project, and it was supposed to include different kinds of units—not all armor, or infantry, but to have artillery, engineer, quartermaster, ordnance as well, so we would seed the whole command, the idea being that everybody will see it work and want one. Then they will go out and buy their own through the system.

Then he talked to the commander of the 5th Signal, the communications staff officer for the command, and said, "You get your organization ready so that we can procure and put in the computer store the company computers necessary and reproduce and stock the software packages necessary that are developed to do that."

So, our company commander project officer went out and developed some things for personnel actions, for training, for logistics, whatever he felt would help him. General Watts' VII Corps said, "I would like to get it for all of my company commanders. I will pay the balance out of my budget." So, we got a bunch of folks oriented toward developing the company commander's computer by a company commander and tried it out on other company commanders. He was not messed with by the lieutenant colonels, colonels, and generals, but it was resourced by the generals—the Commander in Chief—who made it happen in a relatively short time.

Q: So, did it turn out to be popular?

A: Yes.

Q: All the companies saw it and wanted one?

A: Well, like hot cakes.

Q: Yes. Well, that's interesting. That pretty much goes through my questions.

A: Yes. I've checked off every one on my list.

Q: Well, were you ready to go, ready to come back to the States in the summer of '89? Two pretty intense years in Germany. Did you feel that it was time to come back?

A: Yes and no. I really liked USAREUR. I spent three tours over there, and I enjoyed all of it. I enjoyed the activities there and would have been happy to stay over there.

At the same time, it was obvious that I was not going to be selected to be the next Deputy Commander in Chief of Europe, the job that I would be most happy to stay in, so it seemed like time to look for something else.

I knew the Deputy Chief of Engineers position would be open, and I was in the twilight of my career—two possible years left on active duty. So, I thought that it was time, even though I'd really enjoyed my job as Chief of Staff, USAREUR, and I enjoyed working for General Saint, it was time to begin the transition back. To go back and work at another place I liked to work, that is, USACE, as the deputy supporting Hank Hatch, and that would put me in place for the final transition: that is, back to retirement in civilian life.

Deputy Chief of Engineers[3]

Q: In August of 1989 you became Deputy Chief of Engineers. I wonder if you could say something about your feelings at the time of the selection, and how that came about.

A: To be selected as the deputy?

Q: Yes.

A: I was serving as Chief of Staff in USAREUR, and was asked by the Commander in Chief, Butch Saint, whether I would like to stay on as Chief of Staff another year. I said, "No, I think I ought to return to the United States." He said, "What would you like to do?" I said, "I would like to be the Deputy Chief of Engineers."

So, he says, "Okay. I'll be going back in a few weeks. I'll probably see Hank Hatch back there." I said, "Well, I'm going to call him and tell him the same thing."

[3]Interview conducted by Dr. Paul K. Walker on 19 October 1990 at Washington, D.C.